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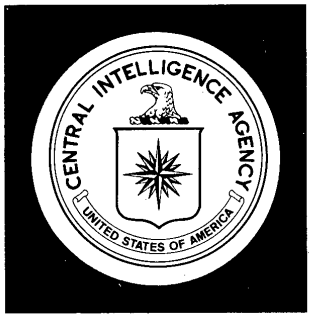

The President's Daily Brief

30 March 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

March 30, 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

30 March 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The EC political committee will be discussing MBFR for the first time today. This could lead to the committee's eventually developing a distinctive European position. *(Page 1)* 25X1

Soviets [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] *(Page 2)*

Tanaka has recommended liberalizing controls on agricultural imports from the US, but is not pushing them against tough opposition. *(Page 3)*

Laos [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] *(Page 4)* 25X1

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MBFR-EC

For the first time MBFR will be on the agenda of the EC political committee when it meets today. The committee will informally explore how MBFR problems might later be formally considered without harming the NATO consultations. Withdrawal of previous French and West German opposition is making the discussion possible.

Bonn says it hopes that the French are searching for a way of joining the MBFR talks without losing face, but it is more likely that Paris sees an opportunity to impress its negative view on other EC members.

The two-month disagreement over Hungary's role has tended to exacerbate the Europeans' fears that MBFR might turn into a bilateral US-USSR exchange that would not pay sufficient attention to their security. Opening the door to MBFR discussions in the EC committee could transform it into a forum for developing a distinctive European position.

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USSR - YEMEN (ADEN)

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JAPAN

Prime Minister Tanaka has recommended liberalization of controls on agricultural imports from the US, but he is not pressing hard against recalcitrant elements of his government. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry appears totally opposed to relaxed restrictions, and opposition remains strong elsewhere in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Even if Tanaka should want to override his minister, it is doubtful that he could get the necessary support from the Diet.

The prime minister is already under heavy domestic criticism for his failure to control inflation and correct domestic ills. The expansion of agricultural imports would provoke increased criticism, and would cost Tanaka further crucial support.

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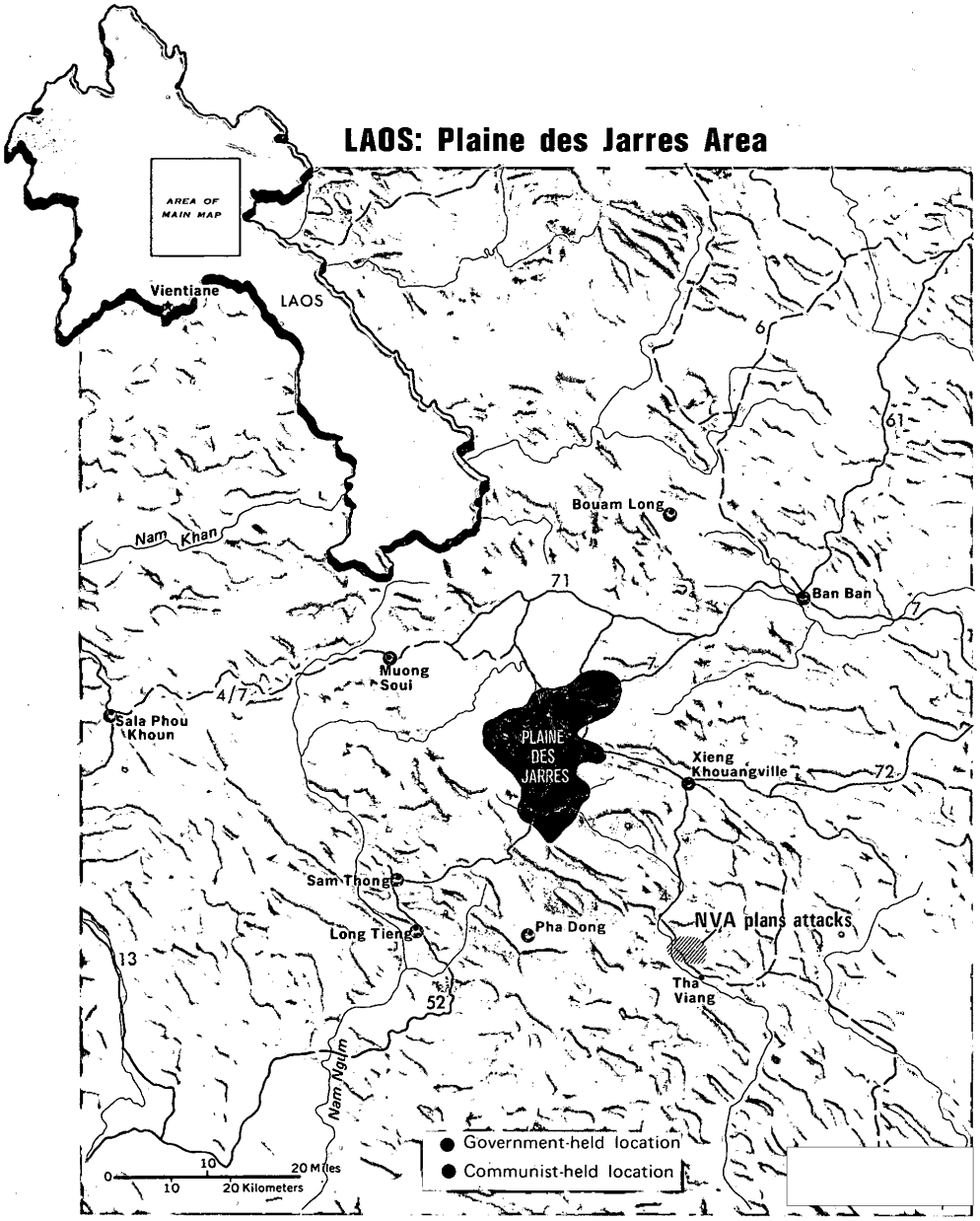

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LAOS

Intercepted Communist messages indicate that North Vietnamese units are planning to launch a major effort within the next few days to dislodge a government force from positions near Tha Viang, southeast of the Plaine des Jarres. Several government battalions moved into this area late last month when the Communists forced them out of positions farther north. Vang Pao has since reinforced the units and now has some 2,000 men in the vicinity of Tha Viang.

The North Vietnamese apparently view the buildup of government forces near Tha Viang as an encroachment on territory that was nominally under Communist control at the time of the cease-fire.

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NOTES

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North Korea: Pyongyang has purchased at least 600,000 tons of corn, wheat, and flour from the West for delivery this year. This is double its normal grain imports from all sources and well above the previous record high of 500,000 tons in 1966. The purchases may reflect a poor harvest last year as well as a possible drop in imports from the USSR, which has usually supplied about half of North Korea's foreign grain.

East - West Germany: Despite the warmer atmosphere of the latest bilateral talks on March 22, little progress was made. West German State Secretary Grabert came away with the impression that Pankow still wants to slow the pace of negotiations.

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